

**PEW INTERNET PROJECT DATA MEMO**

**BY:** Director Lee Rainie (202-419-4500)

**RE:** Sports fantasy leagues online

**DATE:** June 2005

*One in twelve internet users participates in sports fantasy leagues online*

Some 8% of adult American internet users say they participate in sports fantasy leagues online. That represents roughly 11 million people. And on a typical day, about 2 million internet users are going online to oversee and check on their fantasy teams.

These findings about participation in online sports fantasy leagues come from a nationwide phone survey of 1,450 internet users by the Pew Internet & American Life Project conducted between February 21 and March 21 this year. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus three points.

Fantasy sports teams are created by fans who “draft” individual professional athletes to be part of their team. The “team” is an artificial assembly of players from a variety of real teams. The basic statistics of those players are then aggregated after each real-world game to determine how well the team is doing. Fantasy leagues are organized either “rotisserie” style, meaning team standings are based on cumulative player statistics over the entire season, or “head-to-head,” meaning win-loss records based on point totals in individual game-day match-ups.

According to a June 14 article in the Indianapolis Star<sup>1</sup>: “Fantasy league participants have compared themselves to a pro team's general manager because they get to make all the front office-type decisions, like player personnel, contracts and trades. Participants also are like coaches: They make out starting line-ups for each game. That's [a] ... reason to check your players' real-world stats daily.” The article, like others before it, also noted that one possible impact of the rise of fantasy leagues is that some fans now have a reason to root for individual players, rather than local teams.

The population of fantasy league aficionados is dominated by relatively young men.

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<sup>1</sup> Aamidor, Abe, “National fantasy pastime: Millions draft imaginary squads to score virtual choices.” Accessed on June 16, 2005:

<http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050614/LIVING/506140340&SearchID=73211338607177>.

- 86% of the participants in online fantasy leagues are male.
- 63% of the participants are under age 40.

The people who participate in such fantasy leagues tend to be internet veterans. And those who have high-speed broadband connections are considerably more likely than those with dial-up connections to participate in online sports fantasy leagues.

- 76% of the participants in online fantasy leagues have six or more years of internet experience.
- 61% of the participants have broadband at home.
- 51% of the participants use the internet every day.

Those who live in relatively well-off households are more likely than those who live in more modest circumstances to participate in online sports fantasy leagues. Some 12% of internet users living in homes where income exceeds \$75,000 participate in fantasy leagues online, compared to 5% of internet users who live in households earning less than \$30,000.

There are not statistically significant differences in this use of the internet by race and ethnicity. Whites, blacks and English-speaking Hispanics who use the internet are equally likely to build and follow fantasy teams online.

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The Pew Internet & American Life Project is a non-profit initiative of the Pew Research Center, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts to explore the impact of the internet on children, families, communities, health care, schools, the work place, and civic/political life. The Project is non-partisan and does not advocate for any policy outcomes. For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.pewinternet.org/>.

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## Survey questionnaire material

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Data for February 21 – March 21, 2005

Princeton Survey Research Associates International  
for the Pew Internet & American Life Project

Sample:  $n = 2,201$  adults 18 and older

Interviewing dates: 02.21.05 – 03.21.05

Margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points for results based on the full sample [n=2,201]

Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=1,450]

**Q6a** Do you use the internet, at least occasionally?

**Q6b** Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?<sup>2</sup>

	USES INTERNET	DOES NOT USE INTERNET
Current	67	33
January 2005	66	34
November 23-20, 2004	59	41
November 2004	61	39
May/June 2004	63	37
February 2004	63	37
November 2003	64	36
July 2003	63	37
June 2003	62	38
April/May 2003	63	37

**WEB1** Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet to.../Did you happen to do this **yesterday**, or not?<sup>3</sup>

**Based on internet users [N=1,450]**

	total have ever DONE THIS	DID YESTERDAY	have not done this	don't know/ refused
Participate in a fantasy sports league online				
Current	8	2	92	*

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<sup>2</sup> Prior to January 2005, question wording was “Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email?” In February 2005 Tracking, half the sample was asked old Q6 and half was asked new Q6a and Q6b. Current results are for both forms combined. Throughout the current topline, total internet users are defined as those who answered yes to Q6 or Q6a or Q6b.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to January 2005, question wording was “Please tell me if you ever do any of the following when you go online. Do you ever...?/Did you happen to do this yesterday, or not?” In February 2005 Tracking, half the sample was asked old WEB1 and half the sample was asked new WEB1. Current results are for both forms combined.